

# United Methodist Witness

Testifying about faith and works of United Methodists in Southwest Texas

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## Briefs

### UM organizes prayer rally to mark start of school

A UM is organizing the 2nd annual "Pray Before You Play" Rally Sunday in San Antonio.

The event, scheduled for 6 p.m. in the Comalander Football Stadium of the North East Independent School District, is designed to begin the school year with prayer, encourage teens to rely on God and celebrate each student's God-given talents, said Steve Teel, associate pastor of Northern Hills UMC, San Antonio.

"This event is going to be even bigger than last year, when more than 1,000 people filled the stadium with God's glory and heartfelt prayers," Teel said.

More than 30 prayer leaders are scheduled to participate, Teel said. They include students, coaches, teachers, school administrators and parents. For more information check [www.praybeforeyouplay.com](http://www.praybeforeyouplay.com).

### Connectional giving totals lag \$38,000 behind 2000

Giving to connectional causes through July is lagging about \$38,000 behind the total for the first seven months of 2000.

Contributions to apportioned funds totaled \$3.7 million as of July 31. That was 49 percent of the \$7.5 million asking for the year—down 3.4 percent from the July 2000 payment rate.

The San Angelo District has paid the highest share of its apportionments through July—63.1 percent. Other district percentages were Victoria, 60.9; Kerrville, 56.2; McAllen, 55.1; Austin, 53.2; San Antonio, 48.9; and Corpus Christi, 43.8.

### Barcus Moore, 79, dies Aug. 14 in Corpus Christi

The funeral for the Rev. J. Barcus Moore was Aug. 17 at St. Luke's UMC, Corpus Christi.

Moore, 79, a retired clergy member of the Southwest Texas Conference, died Aug. 14 in Corpus Christi.

He began his ministry in 1941 in the Central Texas Conference. He transferred to the Southwest Texas Conference in 1949 and served congregations in Corpus Christi and San Antonio. He was Corpus Christi District superintendent from 1973 to 1978. Moore retired in 1984.



Forty-four participants in the 18th World Methodist Conference from the San Antonio Episcopal Area gather during July 25-31 meeting in Brighton, England. The group includes representatives from both the Rio Grande and Southwest Texas conferences.

## Texans share world Methodist experiences

### Nearly 50 represent San Antonio Area at Brighton meeting

By Julie A. Wiley  
Staff Writer

Nearly 50 Southwest Texas UMs returned from the 18th World Methodist Conference in Brighton, England, last month eager to share their experiences.

Delegates spent July 25-31 at the every-five-year "family reunion" of world Methodists worshipping, seeing dramatic presentations and participating in more than 30 workshops.

"Each day featured dozens of re-

flection workshops, committee reports, worship times, Bible studies and seminars for training Methodist leaders ranging from faith living in other countries to applying Wesleyan principles in the new millennium," said the Rev. Mark Adams, pastor of First UMC, Edinburg.

Theme for the global event was "Jesus: God's Way of Salvation." The conference attracted more than 4,000 delegates—both laity and clergy—from 130 nations. Delegates represented 74 Methodist denominations with a combined membership of 36 million.

All speakers worked the theme into their messages, said the Rev.

Arturo Mariscal, Rio Grande Conference council on ministries director. He termed the preaching "outstanding."

"To me the atmosphere was wonderful because of the speakers," he said. "There was one Bible study led by an African woman who was outstanding. She made the Bible study so exciting and interesting. At the end of the Bible study, she received a standing ovation from participants."

Mariscal said he also appreciated the diversity of conference participants.

"There were people from around (See "Methodists" on back page)

## Call to repent for racial wrongs proves controversial

A call to repent for past racism may be the most controversial issue ever to face the United Methodist Church.

Byrd L. Bonner of San Antonio delivered that message during his keynote address Aug. 14 to the Lay Connectional Convention of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church in Akron, Ohio.

"In the last six months I have had other white United Methodists refuse to attend meetings where repentance for racism was on the agenda," Bonner told lay representatives of the predominantly black 1.3-million-member denomination.

"Others have sent angry letters to ones who have spoken out against vestiges of racism that remain, if not predominate, in our churches."

As a result of those reactions, said Bonner, a member of Travis Park UMC, San Antonio, "I have come to see that a call to genuine repentance may place more stress on the pews of United Methodism than all the other issues that denomination faces rolled



Bonner

together. It strikes at the very core of the human condition—how we treat one another in the name of love."

Bonner, executive director of the United Methodist Church Foundation, has worked actively to promote racial reconciliation within the Methodist family for many years.

He was an elected member of the General Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns from 1992 to 2000. That agency, along with the Council of Bishops, sponsored a service of repentance and reconciliation for racism at the 2000 UMC General Conference in Cleveland.

(See "Repentance" on back page)

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## Briefs

### Christian-Jewish views of Bible to be explored

Southwest Texas UMs can explore similarities and differences in Christian and Jewish perspectives on scripture next month in Kerrville.

The Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns is sponsoring "Through Different Lenses" Sept. 10-11 at Mount Wesley Conference Center.

Amy-Jill Levine, a Jewish woman who is professor of New Testament at Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tenn., is to lead the discussion.

The program begins at 1 p.m. Sept. 10 and concludes with lunch Sept. 11. Registration fee is \$40 per person, which includes three meals and overnight accommodations. Fee for the program only is \$15 per person.

For more information call (210) 408-4500 in San Antonio or toll free (888) 349-4191.

### 53 UM congregations pay '01 apportionments in full

Fifty-three of the 355 Southwest Texas congregations had already paid their 2001 apportionments in full as of July 31.

Chappel Hill UMC led the list. The 20-member congregation had sent in 145 percent of its share of expenses for ministries across the state, nation and world.

Three other congregations had also remitted more than 100 percent of their fair-share asking: Grace UMC, Granite Shoals, 121 percent; Bruni UMC, 110 percent; and First UMC, Lyford, 104 percent.

The count of "100 percent" congregations by district was Austin, 11; Corpus Christi, 7; Kerrville, 9; McAllen, 4; San Angelo, 8; San Antonio, 3; and Victoria, 11.

### Goliad educator named district program director

A former Goliad educator is now program director for the Corpus Christi District.

Cheryl Worley of Goliad, former lay leader for the northern Brush Country portion of the district, filled the program post Aug. 1. She succeeds Valerie Caldwell, who left June 1 for a program staff position at Asbury UMC, Corpus Christi.

A member of First UMC, Goliad, Worley has been a middle school counselor in Goliad for the past 11 years. Before that she was a high school marketing education and home economics teacher for nearly 10 years.

### New chapter officers lead Hill Country Roadrunners

New officers are now leading the Hill Country Roadrunner Chapter of National United Methodist Campers.

They are Henry Knocke, St. Paul's UMC, Kerrville, president; Jerry Jetton, Alamo Heights UMC, San Antonio, first vice president; Jerry Lane, St. Paul's UMC, Kerrville, second vice president and wagon master; Patricia Smathers, Fredericksburg UMC, treasurer; Anabel Harris, St. Paul's UMC, Kerrville; secretary; and Guy Zunker, Grace UMC, San Antonio, membership secretary.



Rosalie, 10, (left) and Caroline Bonner, 13, of San Antonio flank a plaque in London marking the site of John Wesley's "heart warming" conversion experience. The Bonners were among the youngest participants in the 18th World Methodist Conference. Wesley was founder of the worldwide Methodist movement.

## Methodists from around world take part in Brighton conference

(Continued from front page)

"Young people getting involved in their churches is very important," he said. "To see all Christians marching in with their flags representing conferences around the world was wonderful. Bishop Martinez was part of the procession. It was very nice."

Caroline Bonner, 13, and Rosalie Bonner, 10, members of Travis Park UMC, San Antonio, were among the youngest participants at the conference.

"We learned a lot about how you can share the gospel in different ways like in drama, worship and sermons," Rosalie said. "The best was the drama group that presented the Lord's prayer in musical form. We also visited two different seminars."

Caroline called the experience "really interesting."

"We went to a seminar presented by a rocket scientist, and he explained how science and God play together," she said.

The girls said they met 12 other teens from around the world at the conference.

### San Antonio UM named to seminary board

A member of University UMC, San Antonio, has been elected to a four-year term on the board of trustees of UM-related St. Paul School of Theology in Kansas City, Mo.

Mike Nerio, a vice president with Citibank in San Antonio, also serves on the boards of Southern Methodist University, Dallas, and the United Methodist Higher Education Foundation, Nashville, Tenn.

Rosalie added, "I think it's very important for young people to be involved so they can learn from older people and know what to do."

The Bonners spent time before the Brighton meeting in Belfast, Northern Ireland, at the International Association of Methodist Schools, Colleges and Universities Convocation with their aunt and uncle, Bishop Janice Riggle Huie of Little Rock, Ark., and the Rev. Bob Huie, a clergy member of the Southwest Texas Conference.

The Methodist college in Belfast played host to the gathering July 16-20.

The girls heard presentations by world educators from Methodist-related institutions of higher education on peace, gender justice and economic justice.

"Mark Nerio believes in giving back to the church that has nurtured him," said the Rev. Lovett H. Weems Jr., St. Paul's president. "He generously gives of his time and expertise to boards that are making a difference in the lives of others. We are honored to have him join in advancing St. Paul's mission of preparing a new generation of leaders for the church."

## Repentance doesn't undo past wrongs of racism, Texan says

(Continued from front page)

Bonner, a lay delegate to that conference from Southwest Texas, spoke of his experiences with racism during the service.

Sponsors of the General Conference service urged individual annual conferences to go through similar acts of repentance. Bishop Joel Martinez has called for a service of repentance and reconciliation during the 2002 session of the Southwest Texas Annual Conference.

These acts of repentance don't wipe the slate of past wrongs clean, Bonner said in Akron. Methodists shouldn't ever try to pretend that past racial injustice within the church didn't exist.

"I don't mean wallow in that painful history," he said, "but take it and know it and commit it to our hearts and learn from it and rise above it and beyond it and, yes, sometimes, restore what has been lost."

Bonner said that his four years on the Commission on Pan Methodist Cooperation and Union taught him "much more about racial justice than about cooperation or union."

That body is working to merge the UMC with three historically black denominations: the African Methodist Episcopal Church, African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church and Christian Methodist Episcopal Church. They broke away from what is now the UMC over the past 200 years because of racial discrimination.

"We have challenged ourselves to live in new ways—to put ourselves in the place of others to try to understand their pain," Bonner said. "Of course, we cannot fully, but isn't that the example of Jesus?"

"One way that Jesus preached was by identifying with those who traveled different paths from what he had. That is a challenge for any one of us who has and does draw distinctions about people because of the color of skin."

As a white UM, Bonner noted, he hasn't:

- Felt excluded from worship because of skin color.

- Been denied credit because of skin color.

- Been stalked by store security because of skin color.

- Been denied promotion on the job because of skin color.

- Seen institutions important to his heritage demolished because they didn't serve the majority group.

"But I know full well that not until I share—not just hear but share—that bitter cry can God within my spirit dwell to bring God's kingdom nigh," Bonner said.